

## PROPOSAL: Toward Deepening Intercultural Leadership

Origin: Justice, Mission, and Outreach Committee of Region 15/ Justice, Mission, and Outreach Committee of Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region

### 1. What is the issue? *(describe in broad terms)*

In light of the discussions on racism experienced within our denomination that developed at the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council in Oshawa, the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committees of Region 15 and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region believe the Holy Spirit is calling our Regions to:

- Affirm our commitment as Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to living into interculturalism and racial justice within all levels of our ministries (at the congregational and regional levels) in practical ways.
- Support congregations to engage in this important ministry by supporting clergy within Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to access transformative, denominationally-approved in-person intercultural and racial justice training that is especially pertinent to life in the Maritime regions.

### 2. Why is this issue important? *What are the key underlying theological, ecclesiological, missional, or justice issues? What is the history/background of this issue? What are the principles informing this issue? What would be the implications of taking no action on this issue?*

According to the United in Learning website, “Racial justice training for **all active ministry personnel** was mandated at the 39th General Council 2006. The proposal came out of a long history of the United Church’s engagement with issues of social justice [such as being called to respond to the pain and injustices caused by racism, both in our communities of faith and in wider society]. In 2000, the United Church adopted its [Anti-Racism Policy](#) statement; racial justice training is one effort to help the church continue to live out its principles.”<sup>1</sup>

Currently, this five-hour training program is offered via a two-day, online course through the United in Learning program. However, in light of the discussions on racism that developed at the 43<sup>rd</sup> General Council, the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committees of Region 15 and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region feel it is important that a more robust, interactive and in-person racial justice training would be beneficial to leaders in the church.

As people striving to follow in the love and Way of Jesus Christ, we are living in a time when it is critical that communities of faith stand up against racism and oppression and live into the call to become intercultural communities. To do this, it is critical that clergy have a deep understanding of racism, privilege and white supremacy, as well as how to help create brave spaces of inclusion.

It is the opinion of the Justice, Mission and Outreach Committees that in-person racial justice training delivered by leaders experienced with the local context would be more challenging and transformative for participants than an online course because participants would be able to go deeper in their learnings and have more support in processing their challenges. In-person racial justice training would culminate in ministry personnel who have

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.united-in-learning.com/index.php/rj-workshop> (Accessed 29 March, 2019).

a better understanding of how to live out racial justice in practical ways and would therefore be better equipped leaders for our communities in this time.

Furthermore, we already have a Maritime-based training centre in our midst that is a national and denominational leader in racial justice and anti-oppression training. The Tatamagouche Centre has been a leader in racial justice work in our denomination and within the Maritimes since 1992. The Centre currently offers the “Building Bridges” program, which is an in-person racial justice and anti-oppression training program grounded in the experiences of people based in the Maritimes, which would be more beneficial for Maritime-based clergy responding to local and regional issues and needs.

In addition to this, by supporting the Tatamagouche Centre through promoting its “Building Bridges” program as an alternative to the online racial justice training for clergy, Region 15 and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region would continue the important work of economically supporting Maritime workers contracted and employed through the Tatamagouche Centre, as well as ensuring that expert, excellent racial justice facilitation can continue to happen within the Maritimes.

**3. How might the Council of Action respond to the issue? Name a possible response that the Council of action might consider:**

- Direct the Executive Minister of Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to send a letter of support to the Office of Vocation requesting that they endorse the Tatamagouche Centre’s “Building Bridges” program as a recognized and acceptable racial justice training for clergy. with Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region.
- Direct the Executive of Region 15/Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to support clergy and congregations within Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to engage in the important ministry of racial justice by financially subsidizing clergy participation in the Tatamagouche Centre’s racial justice training program to be of equal cost to the United in Learning racial justice webinar training.
- Affirm our commitment as Region 15/ Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Region to living into interculturalism and racial justice within all levels of our ministries (at the congregational and regional levels) by prioritizing the development of programs, practices, and concrete goals - including education on white privilege.

**4. For the body transmitting this proposal to the Council of Action: Are there comments, affirmations, suggestions you would like to make with respect to this proposal?**